

REMARKS

An Office Action mailed April 26, 2005 rejected all of the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103. As of this Amendment, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-11, 13-18, 20-21, 23-24, and new claims 27-32 are pending. Applicant hereby respectfully requests reconsideration of the application.

CLAIMS 1-9

The Office Action rejected Claim 1 as being obvious in view of Pugliese III (6,044,353) in view of Manabe et al. (6,594,547). The Office Action states that Pugliese III discloses everything as claimed except for the number of bags that are to be checked. That aspect is asserted to be shown by Manabe et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Applicant submits that neither Manabe et al. nor Pugliese III, alone or in combination, teaches the claimed invention. Pugliese III is an automated baggage check-in system. Importantly, the Pugliese III system is backward from that of claim 1, teaching that baggage is to be checked first, curbside, before proceeding into the terminal to check in.

The office action points to column 7, lines 1-6 for the proposition that Pugliese III instructs passengers to first obtain a boarding pass before checking baggage. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. At column 6, line 40-47 (just preceding the excerpt cited in the office action), Pugliese III teaches that passengers will typically first check in bags upon arrival at the airport. The specific language at column 7 provides that the “passenger *then* proceeds through the entrance 12 of the airline terminal...” where there are automatic ticket machines. The passage at column 11, lines 17-37 also cited by the examiner does refer to a requirement that the passenger have a reservation before being allowed to check in baggage. That is quite different from claim 1, however, which requires a passenger to first obtain a boarding pass that indicates the number of bags to be checked, then check the bags in accordance with that indication on the boarding pass.

Moreover, Pugliese III expressly teaches that its automated system requires the passenger to indicate the number of bags to be checked at the bag check station because it did not obtain that information from the boarding pass. Thus, Pugliese III explains that the machine will "...request that the passenger input the number of bags to be checked for the destination specified in the reservation." (col. 4, lines 26-27). The Applicant is not aware of any indication in Pugliese III that suggests the desirability of obtaining the bag check information directly from the boarding pass.

The office action also cites to Manabe as teaching that it is known to indicate the number of bags on a boarding pass. As with Pugliese, Manabe has the process backward. According to Manabe, when the passenger checks in a computer terminal reads the boarding pass. Nothing in Manabe suggests that it reads the number of bags to be checked from the boarding pass. On the contrary, Manabe does the opposite. Manabe explains that the "the person in charge, operating the baggage numbers unit input 41, inputs the number of baggages 1 checked by the passenger P." Column 3, lines 43-45. After the quantity is hand-entered by the agent, the system prints luggage tags and writes corresponding information onto the boarding pass. Again, the Applicant is not aware of anything in Manabe teaching this aspect.

By contrast, claim 1 is a two-step process. The passenger first enters information at an electronic station at the airport, indicating the number of bags to be checked. A boarding pass is printed, also indicating the number of bags to be checked. When the passenger proceeds to the baggage check station, the process proceeds more quickly because the passenger has already independently indicated the number of bags, and the boarding pass bears an indication of that information. Any reliance on Pugliese III and Manabe for this claimed invention is at best a hindsight reconstruction. More importantly, they do not at all teach the steps of the claimed method arranged as claimed, even with the benefit of hindsight.

Therefore, Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 1 is allowable. The dependent claims 2, 3, 5-7, and 9 should also be in condition for allowance as depending from an allowable base claim.

CLAIMS 10-19

The office action rejected claim 10 under Section 103 as being obvious in view of Pugliese III and Manabe, as described above, and further in view of Barclay. The office action further contends that Barclay teaches that it is desirable to only allow bags to be checked if a passenger has checked in. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Rather, Barclay teaches that it is desirable to compare lists of passengers who have checked-in but not boarded against lists of baggage in order to remove baggage for those who have not boarded. That is an entirely different proposition. Indeed, Barclay says nothing about whether bags may be checked in the first instance without having obtained a boarding pass prior to checking in bags. Applicants are not aware of any prior art teaching this specific aspect in accordance with claim 10, which will “allow baggage to be checked into the flight at the baggage drop station only if the passenger has already checked in.”

Consequently, independent Claim 10 is allowable. Because Claim 11 and 13-18 depend from independent Claim 10, they are allowable for the same reasons that make Claim 10 allowable.

CLAIMS 20-21, 23-24

The Office Action rejected Claims 20, 21, and 23-26 as being unpatentable under section 103. Claims 25-25 have been canceled. The Office Action states that Ross teaches when a passenger arrives at the airport, they are directed by appropriate signs to a passenger information Kiosk and that it would have been obvious to incorporate the teachings of Ross under the systems taught by Pugliese, III and Barclay. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant submits that neither Pugliese, III (as described above with respect to Claim 1), Barclay, or Ross teach or suggest, alone or in combination, that the information gleaned from the boarding pass also includes the number of bags that are to be checked. Moreover, the sign indicated by Ross is merely an indicator for where the kiosk is located. The kiosk itself is an informational kiosk, not an electronic kiosk that dispenses a boarding pass. The Applicant does not claim to have invented a sign directing passengers to specific locations. Instead, the Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention should be viewed as a whole. It is not the mere use of a sign that matters. Rather, it is the sign specifically directing passengers to “proceed to one or more of the kiosks before proceeding to the baggage drop station.” The specific direction to start at one location (kiosk) prior to proceeding at another location (bag check) is not taught or suggested in any of the prior art of record. Following that particular order can vastly hasten the process by gathering initial information at the kiosk, saving it in the system and printing it on the boarding pass, then using that information for further processing such as baggage check. Nothing in Ross or the other art of record suggests this process, and the mere existence of a sign giving directions does not teach or suggest the claimed invention, arranged in the manner as claimed.

Therefore, Applicant submits that independent Claim 20 is allowable over the cited references. Because Claims 21 and 23-24 depend from allowable independent Claim 20, they are allowable for the same reasons that make their corresponding independent claim allowable.

CLAIMS 27-32

New claims 27-32 should also be in condition for allowance. Claim 27 is a method for checking passengers into a flight, involving two steps: first obtaining at a first location a boarding pass that contains passenger information, then at a second location, further processing passenger check-in in accordance with additional information contained on the boarding pass.

Much like claim 1, dependent claim 28 specifically indicates that the "additional information" comprises the number of bags to be checked, and that the baggage check step uses this prior information contained on the boarding pass. Claim 28 should be allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Claims 29-32 indicate other types of additional passenger information that are indicated by the passenger, then used at the second station in order to facilitate check-in. The Applicant is not aware of any prior art teaching or suggesting these claimed inventions.

CONCLUSION

The applicant respectfully submits that the claims are now in condition for allowance, and requests reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims of the pending application are now in condition for allowance over the cited references. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections, allowance, and early passage through issuance. If the examiner has any questions, the examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's agent listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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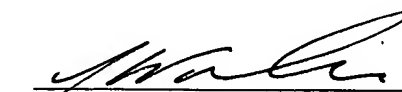
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